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Critical Management Studies: Introducing A New Perspective

Hendragunawan Sardjan Thayf¹, M. Mukhtasar Syamsuddin², Supartiningsih³

¹, Hassanudin University ,Indonesia, ^{1,2} Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia

Abstract

The Critical Management Studies, as an emerging perspective and research topic in management, has helped scholars to investigate management topics and issues with the perspective of Critical Theory of Frankfurt School. The Critical Theory itself is a synthesis of philosophy and social science which pioneered by several german philosophers in the beginning of 20th century. Although this perspective regained its relevancy and popularity recently, in Indonesia, the Critical Management Studies is quite alien and rarely be employed as a discussion topic or a research perspective. Therefore, in this study we want to offer Critical Management Studies to be an important alternative and it will be very relevant to the development of management theory and research in Indonesia. We conduct a literature-based research and our results are appeared in four themes: (1) The explanation about the birth and the thought of Frankfurt School thinkers, (2) The description about the development of Critical Management Studies, (3) The critiques against Critical Management Studies from the mainstream management thought, (4) The evaluation of the concept of Critical Management Studies from the researchers own perspective. We advise several potentialities and prospect for implementation of Critical Management Studies in the context of management theory development and research practice in Indonesia. However, as a conceptual study further effort still needed to apply this perspective.

Keywords: management theory, business, philosophy



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INTRODUCTION

Between management and philosophy there is a wide chasm, especially in Indonesia. Management, as an applied science, has become very technocratic and pragmatic (Alvesson and Willmott, 2003: 8; Wattimena, 2017: 2). Meanwhile, philosophy as a theoretical study seems abstract, and even almost absurd, for most management practitioners and theoreticians. It is true, we can still find easily books about philosophical wisdom (which translate to Indonesian as "falsafah") in leadership style of management theme. However, "falsafah" is not philosophy. The former is personal life wisdoms, crystallized from personal experience, while the latter is a formal science that rests on universal rationality and has its distinctive methods, concepts and styles of discourse. There is also many books on business ethics written by management experts or moral philosophers, such as works of Bertens (2013), Yosephus (2010), Endro (1999) and Keraf (1998). However, business ethics is only a narrow part of the scope of philosophy, and accordingly, there are still greater benefits that science management should be able to derive from academical philosophy.

In a broader scope, philosophy is still something alien to most Indonesians. This science has never been a part of Indonesia's primary and secondary education curriculum. Contrary in

European countries, especially France and Germany, philosophy has long been studied by students in their teen-age as a compulsory subject (Bertens, 2014). Several African countries that were colonized by France, such as Morocco and Tunisia, also adopted this policy. In the United States and Europe, the ideas and practices of teaching philosophical skill to children at an earlier age, have been developed and practiced since eighties, through a project shortened as P4C (Philosophy for Children). Hence, it is understandable if prejudice and even misconception against philosophy is quite firmly rooted in Indonesia, both among laymans and intellectuals (Bertens, 1987: 12; Bertens, 1992: 39; Magnis-Suseno, 2009: 6).

The situation described above is an alarming one. Professor Franz Magnis-Suseno, one of the pioneers of philosophy education in Indonesia and founder of STF Driyarkara, warned that it would be difficult to achieve intellectual excellence in a university environment if one ignores philosophy (Magnis-Suseno, 2017: 5). According to him, the intellectual realm will become "tasteless, dogmatic and sterile" without the attention of scholars towards philosophy. There are four characteristics of philosophy that make it relevant for other sciences: critical thinking, deep (radical) thinking, dissatisfaction with what seems useful, and its freedom from pragmatism (Magnis-Suseno, 2009: 7). These four characters are important for the development and advancement of science, especially for social sciences and humanities. Professor Kees Bertens from Atmajaya University also emphasized the three important roles of philosophy towards science: as a critical partner that accompanies the use of science and technology results, as a reviewer of the meaning of the goals and objects of science, and as a provider of ethical frameworks for concrete problems that arise in the midst of in society at large (Bertens, 1987: 22-23). Negligence to philosophy also means the loss of benefits and important roles it provide.

Therefore, in this paper the authors propose that Critical Management Studies (CMS) as a new sub-discipline that is both challenging and promising for the study, research and application of management in Indonesia. The CMS is a result of applying critical social philosophy analysis on management science topics. So, CMS can be perceived as a contribution from philosophy to management science. At the same time, the science of management has made philosophy more grounded and applicable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a number of variants of critical social philosophy, also known as critical theories in the social sciences. Ben Agger, a contemporary critical theorist, listed them as follows: Marxism, the Frankfurt School, Cultural Studies, Theory of Feminism, Post-Derridean Structuralism, and Postmodernism (Agger, 2007). According to Agger, there are seven characteristics which put those theories under the umbrella term "Critical Social Theory approach". They are actively constructed by scientists based on certain assumptions about the world and with the belief that society is constantly changing; they are political and encourage social movements to replace the present and the past condition which is colored with domination, exploitation and oppression, with a future that is more emancipatory; they believe that domination, exploitation and oppression is structural and had to be made explicit in order to be realized by wider or larger part of society; they seek to dissolve the false consciousness that makes society unaware of the oppression upon them, and even enjoys participating in preserving the structures that dominate them; they believe that social change is possible to be started from the smallest environment and by daily actions; they see a dialectical relationship between social structures and humans; finally, the reject the pragmatism of the revolutionary group which considers that in order to bring about emancipatory conditions, freedom and life to the oppressed, than the life of other human beings from a different class or group, can be sacrificed.

In this paper we choose to focus on the Frankfurt School, because the term Critical Theory was firstly coined by its leading thinker, Max Horkheimer. The Frankfurt School is a term pinned to the line of thought of a group of German intellectuals who were members of a foundation called Institut Fuer Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research). This institute is a research institution founded in 1923 in the city of Frankfurt, Germany and affiliated with the University of Frankfurt (now, named as Goethe Universitaat). The main figures of this school were Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), and Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929). Several other names can be added to this list: Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin, Franz Neumann, Otto Kirchheimer, Karl August Wittfogel, Henryk Grossmann, and Arkadij Gurland (Hardiman, 2009: 45). Today, Axel Honneth, Rainer Forst, Seyla Benhabib and Nancy Fraser, are also figures who carry this style of thinking (Anderson, 2000).

The term Critical Theory itself, was first raised by Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) in his essay entitled "Traditionelle und kritische theorie", or "Traditional Theory and Critical Theory" (Bertens, 2002: 200; Bronner and Kellner, 1989: 1). In this long essay which was published in 1937, Horkheimer contrasted critical theory with traditional theory. He made critical theory as the antithesis of traditional theory. Traditional theories are social science theories that are built by using natural sciences as their ideal model, and are based on Descartes' philosophical thinking method (Berendzen, 2017). In Descartes' method, a problem is broken down into smaller and simpler parts to be solved. With such analytical thinking, the problem will be easier to handle because it has been translated into smaller units where the correctness of the correspondence can be verified. Traditional theory is a theory typical of bourgeois society (Horkheimer, 1989: 197). It does not have any interest to evaluate or to criticize the social reality. It accepts reality as it is. Its main concern is to develop a description and explanation of current social phenomena. Therefore, it maintains the *status quo*.

According to Alex Lanur, traditional theory has been criticized by Horkheimer for its claim of neutrality in front of social reality, its a-historic tendency, and its polarization of theory and praxis (Lanur, 1997: 6). Meanwhile, A. Bagus Laksana, who emphasizes more on the epistemological aspects of critical theory, describes the differences between traditional theory and critical theory into three aspects: (1) deductive-positivistic theoretical method, (2) the relationship between the subject and the object which is assumed to be clearly and firmly distant, and (3) the relationship between theory and society (Laksana, 1997: 16-17). In matter of relationship between theory and society, Horkheimer emphasizes that in the perspective of Critical Theory, scientific thinking activities are not neutral and should not be separated from the social, historical, and political context of a society in which a thinker carries out his activities. This attitude is summarized by Horkheimer as "Critical theory is neither 'deeply rooted' like totalitarian propaganda nor 'detached' like the liberalist intelligentsia" (Horkheimer, 1989: 223-224).

The core idea of critical theory can be described negatively as an effort to realize a society that is free from all the shackles of exploitation and oppression (Magnis-Suseno, 2016: 163). Positively, this goal can be formulated as an effort to realize the Enlightenment Rationality (from Immanuel Kant, W. F. Hegel and Max Weber) in a society that is equal (Karl Marx's idea) and happy (in the sense of Freudian psychoanalysis). The critical power that can be found in this school of thought is in the form of a conscious and systematic efforts, to take a reflective distance from reality in order to reveal what is hidden behind it, and then get involved in society to seek change for the better social conditions, i.e a just society.

According to Horkheimer, there are four main characters of Critical Theory (Hardiman, 2016: 64). First, Critical Theory departs from the concrete conditions of humans in the life of society (doing immanent criticism). Second, Critical Theory also suspects itself through evaluation, self-

criticism, and reflection, in order to prevent itself from becoming another ideology. Third, Critical Theory wants to expose the practice of domination and exploitation that goes on beneath the seemingly fine surface of modern life. Finally, Critical Theory does not offer a neutral, objective, and positivistic view of social relations, because it is built for emancipatory purposes. Critical theory does not hesitate to show its partiality to the weaker and the oppressed.

Critical theory is a dialectical synthesis between philosophy and sociology (Sindhunata, 1983: 11 and Hardiman, 2009: 33). In this theory, the science of philosophy is used to understand society's problems, to think about the possibilities of a better situation, and at the same time to strive for a better situation. Conversely, theorists of this school also make empirical data and practical relevance to emancipatory endeavors, as anchors for their philosophical reflections—although in a broader context, they were against the instrumentalist attitude. Research conducted by members of the Frankfurt School is often collaborative in its nature. They work together with experts in other disciplines. They also do not constrained themselves of utilizing statistical data or using survey methods and questionnaire instruments in collecting data (Hardiman, 2009: 33).

Critical theory of the Frankfurt School can also be viewed as one variant of Neo-Marxism, together with economic determinism, Hegelian Marxism, neo-Marxist sociological economics, historically oriented Marxism, neo-Marxist spatial analysis, and postmarxist theory (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2014: 278). Frankfurt School thinkers were among those who were critical of Marxism, especially of Orthodox Marxism which was proposed by Kautsky and Lenin. From the very beginning, Gruenberg as the first director of the Institut für Sozialforschung (Institute of Social Research) which housed the early thinkers of this school, emphasized: "the relationship with Marxism must be understood not in terms of political parties but only in a scientific sense" (Sindhunata, 1983: 22). It can be said that this institute adopted the ideas of Karl Marx as a (scientific) socialism and avoided Marx's formulation of communism as a political program or its application as dogma by some of Marx's successors.

As a school of philosophical thought and social theory that developed in the early twentieth century, the Frankfurt School may be quite old in the chronology of the birth of social science thoughts. However, the attention and use of Critical Theory in the study of business organizations only began to appear in the 1970s. On the continent of Europe, several organizational studies scientists who met at a conference in the Netherlands, formed a scientific information exchange network which was later called the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) in 1973. This international network of researchers seeks to disseminate the use of analytical and critical approaches in organizational studies. At that time, the discourse of organizational studies was so sterile from political and sensitive issues such as sexism, power, the development of capitalism, as well as the mixing of the state and capital interests. The discourse was more dominated by individualist themes, such as motivation and satisfaction (Clegg and Dunkerley, 2005: 47). The EGOS group then published a journal named Organization Studies in collaboration with a publisher, deGruyter (European Group for Organizational Studies, 2017). With the presence of this journal, topics which previously considered too sensitive or taboo in organizational sociology, have obtained a media that can contain and disseminate them.

A wider and more intense interest in the critical theory approach emerged at the end of the 20th century. The the starting point for the application of CMS was a book written by Mats Alvesson and Hugh Wilmott, entitled Critical Management Studies, published in 1992 (Parker, 2005: 353). This book is a collection of four papers written by six authors and which had been presented in a small meeting in 1989 (Alvesson and Willmott, 2003a: 1 and 4). In 1998, the Administrative Science Quarterly also published a special edition of Year 43 Number 2, which reviewed the application of a critical perspective on organizational control. In the same year, the Academy of Management provided a forum that was even bigger than just a discussion session, in the form of pre-conference

activities, for academics who were interested in a critical approach in highlighting management topics.

Some writings that also use a critical theory approach have actually been published earlier than the works collected in the book edited by Alvesson and Wilmott. Among the articles referred to, is an article by Brian D. Steffy and Andrew J. Grimes entitled A Critical Theory of Organization Science which was published in the Academy of Management Review journal in 1986. This paper departs from an epistemological point of view, challenging the research paradigm in organizational science which was heavily empirical-analytical (Steffy and Grimes, 1986: 322).

From an even earlier date, from 1981, there is an article by Robert B. Denhardt in the journal Public Administration Review, November-December issue, entitled Toward a Critical Theory of Public Organization. Denhardt questions the existence of public administration science which, according to him, is experiencing an identity crisis. Denhardt offers a critical approach from the Frankfurt School that combines praxis and theory as a remedy for the alleged crisis (Denhardt, 1981: 634).

Article by Stephen Wood and John Kelly entitled Towards Critical Management Science published in Management Studies Journal Vol. 15 No. 1 in 1978, critically dissected three articles by Churchman, Hales, and Whitley, which appeared in the early 1970s. Wood and Kelly write that the intent of their paper is to assess "the radical critique arising from (and possible alternatives to) traditional managerial-oriented 'management science'". According to Wood and Kelly, the three writers who use critical and radical approaches are still less methodical in their works. They had not been succeeding in presenting a clear relationship between theory, concrete reality, and the practical purposes of the analysis carried out.

In addition to those writings, there are several other works, which are called by Gray and Wilmott (2005) as "studies that anticipated" the birth of CMS. These types of studies were produced by mainly sociologists. They were written by P. D. Anthony, Loren Bartz, Stewart Clegg, David Dunkey, and C. Wright Mills.

Some of the important articles from the CMS have been compiled in at least two books, namely *Critical Management Studies: a Reader*, edited by Christopher Gray and Hugh Wilmott. (2005), as well as *Studying Management Critically*, edited by Mats Alvesson and Hugh Wilmott (2003a). In the first book, 17 articles are grouped into four parts: those that anticipate the birth of CMS (from PD Anthony, Loren Baritz, Stewart Clegg and David Dunkerley, and C. Wright Mills), writings that critically examine management science in general (from Mats Alvesson and Stanley Deetz, David Knights, and Richard Marsden), writings critical of certain functional aspects of management (from Paul S. Adler, James R. Barker, Bill Cooke, Heather Hopfl, Rosemary Pringle, Barbara Townley and Hugh Wilmott), and the last type, writings that reflect back on the CMS (from Martin Parker, Paul Thompson and Edward Wray-Bliss). The second book, *Studying Management Critically*, collects a smaller number of works, but focuses on the functional areas of business. The nine authors compiled in a book that was firstly published under the title *Critical Management Studies*, are: Stanley Deetz (human resource management), John Forester (methodology), Joanne Martin (feminism), David L. Levy et al (strategic management), Glenn Morgan (marketing), Michael Power et al (accounting), John M. Jermier and Linda C. Forbes (environment), Gibson Burrell and Karen Dale (business architecture), and Martin Parker (business ethics). These two books are of anthological kind; however, a more thoroughly and integrated discussion could be found in an theoretical work of Alvesson and Willmot's.

The interest in the thinking of the Frankfurt School in Indonesian academics is actually quite high. Some original written works, both in the form of books and research reports, have been produced by them. However, almost all of them are the work of academics in the fields of philosophy, sociology, politics, history, law, and even in communication and education. Akhyar Yusuf Lubis wrote

"*Pemikiran Kritis Kontemporer*" (2015, RajaGrafindo Perkasa, Jakarta), followed by T. M. S. Poepowardojo and Alexander Seran, who wrote a joint work "*Diskursus Teori-Teori Kritis*" (2016, Kompas Book Publisher, Jakarta). Another work came from a writer based in Yogyakarta, Maghfur M. Ramin, with the title "*Teori Kritis Filsafat Lintas Mazhab*". Rakhmat Hidayat also reviewed the application of critical theories in the field of education in a book entitled "*Pedagogi Kritis: Sejarah, Perkembangan, dan Pemikiran*" published by RajaGrafindo Perkasa in 2013.

From the types of work in the form of research reports, there are at least four studies that use a general critical theory perspective (Yunani, 2016; Prasetyo, 2015; Ridwan, 2000; and Watloly, 2000). In addition, there are quite a number of works that use a more specific critical theory approach. Individually, the Critical Theory figure whose thinking is most often used in research is Habermas (there are more than 20 studies—without including all studies on the most popular topic "public space", such as from the disciplines of urban planning and architecture). Among the Habermasian topics from these studies are coming from the field of social ontology (Fathoni, 2011 and Supriadi: 2013), epistemology (Nurcahyono, 2002), and critical hermeneutics (Dwinanda, 2017 and Muqsith, 2012). After Habermas, Marcuse with his criticism of the capitalism system attracted the attention of four researchers (Gultom, 2015; Kwok, 2010; Saumantri, 2018; and Husain, 2008). There are two studies on conflict and harmony between religious communities that utilize Honneth's ideas, namely research conducted by Azis (2017) and by Laili (2018). Meanwhile, the thought of Rainer Forst, as the "youngest" philosopher in this school, was discussed in Nara's (2017) research on the right of justification as the foundation for creating a just society.

The discussion of CMS in the field of management or business can be found in the works of Thayf (2021), Kodryah, Hartono and Amboningtyas (2018), and Chasanah and Mathori (2017). Thayf uses the Frankfurt School approach to discover the nature of the corporation. He formulated it, by using the metaphor of "social application" which borrowed from the terminology of the cyber world. Meanwhile, for corporate praxis, he developed a model of corporate behavior towards the state, society, nature and employees, using concepts from Frankfurt School thinkers, from Horkheimer to Forst. Kodryah, Hartono and Amboningtyas examined the management of loan-based FinTech from the perspective of Critical Management Studies (CMS) by applying Habermas' public space concept. Meanwhile, Chasanah and Mathori gave general explanation about CMS on their expositional paper. According to them, apart from offering alternative management theories, CMS can also be used to improve management practices so as to create sustainable organizations, not only economically but also socio-ecologically. In addition, in terms of teaching CMS at the university level, Chasana and Mathori convinced that CMS could increase students' analytical power so that they could review the legitimacy of "traditional management values and social assumptions".

RESEARCH METHOD

Our paper is a conceptual paper resulted from a library research. We applied hermeneutical reading on the available primary and secondary literature and mentally constructing our own conceptual map on the issue. The methodology we employ also consists of historical account, comparative assessments, holistic review, heuristics, and analogical language presentation (see Bakker and Zubair, 1990).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The formal acceptance of the critical theory perspective in the Management Academy association was manifested by providing discussion sessions for critical management study

enthusiasts at the association's meeting in 1989 (Alvesson and Deetz, 2006: 255). The new discipline section in this association is called Critical Management Studies (CMS). CMS is a field of study in which critical social theories are used to dissect policies and practices in management. In 1999, at the University of Manchester, the CMS international conference was held for the first time. Since then, this annual event has been held routinely every two years. In 2003, the Academy of Management in the United States made CMS as group topic, aligning with other traditional topics such as strategic management, operations research, and entrepreneurship. On the official website of the Academy of Management, a leading association of experts and management scientists, one can find the scope of the Study Area (Specific Domain) of the CMS as "as a forum within the Academy for the expression of views critical of established management practices and the established social order" (Academy of Management, n.d).

New directions for management science research are prescribed from the statement of Academy of Management on its website. The object of research is no longer solely situated in the internal organization, but is expanded by considering a broader context (i.e "the established social order"). Previously, organization were seen as a black box that was impervious and impermeable to the dynamics of its surrounding. This broader context surely is not an ideal condition, but must be understood as an unbalanced social order and a damaged natural environment, which are the result of the business organizations activities. Business organizations, corporations, banks have become effective vehicles for practices such as profit-seeking, discrimination and pollution. The ends of such operations are social domination and ecological exploitation.

There are three aspects of a critical approach in management studies, according to Valérie Fournier and Chris Gray. Those aspects are performativity, denaturalization and reflexivity (Fournier and Gray, 2000). Performativity means the demand from the scientific community and management practitioners upon every form of knowledge to contribute to solving concrete business problems. Only by such a performance, can a knowledge gains recognition and acceptance from the community. However, to make practical solutions as a single goal, means to accept the domination of instrumental reason. Such reasoning, in the view of critical theory, is exploitative and ultimately destructive, so that its dominance must be subdued and controlled carefully. Therefore, in creating knowledge about business organizations and their management, critical theorists hold the principle of non-performativity. This principle of non-performativity refuses obligation to make knowledge a mere tool for increasing efficiency and effectiveness. The second aspect is denaturalization of aspects of reality, including concepts, which have been accepted and considered to be something natural (natural) and value-free (neutral). The reflexivity aspect is related to the epistemological strategy of critical theory. Critical theory requires its practitioner to question their own basic assumptions, in order to avoid getting caught up at distorting and illusory absolutism.

CMS is also not free from criticism on the alternative perspectives it offers. Terms introduced by CMS such as "false consciousness" and "false need" is considered had been utilized by critical theorists to put themselves superior and more knowledgeable to their fellow subjects, so that they have the authority to dictate the subject in how to feel, think, and act. Other subjects are generally silenced and bearing risk of being considered foolish by experts if they reject the configuration of reality offered by Critical Theory. On the other hand, critical theorists also hold the prejudice that the concepts and methodologies they develop will be taken over and used by management to assert their dominance (Clegg and Hardy, 1996: 435-436).

According to Clegg and Hardy's views, the gap between these two prejudices has actually narrowed as new views have developed among management practitioners as well as critical theorists themselves regarding corporations and CMS. Those more convergent views are: prioritizing the interests of society over the pursuit of profit, recognition of plurality of interest,

efforts to achieve ethical equality, willingness to reconsider old views that have been accepted as they are and are considered as facts as they should be, and the last, greater appreciation on the role of language in discussion and reflection among parties in organization (Clegg and Hardy, 1996: 432).

From the previous exposition, a comparison between the ideals of the Frankfurt School and the realization achieved by the CMS, could be made more clearly. In order to obtain a holistic picture, comparisons are carried out guided by three categories. Those categories are the object of study, the basic principles and the ultimate goal.

Regarding the object of study, in accord with CMS label, the attention is put mainly on the management aspect in business. This means that the main focus is given to the processes, methods and relationships that occur in the daily operation of an organization. Unfortunately, the institutional framework has not received proportionate attention in such a focus. What is meant by the institutional framework is the corporation as a social entity that aims to generate profits for the growth of owner's capital. The institutional context gives different characters between the management processes in the fields of business, social association, and government. Even in the business management process, there are quite striking differences between management practices in large corporations and similar practices in family firms and cooperatives. Therefore, a critical study of the corporation is also important.

In terms of basic principles, apart from performativity, denaturalization and reflexivity, one important category can be added, namely plurality. The method of thinking developed by the main thinkers of the Frankfurt School is intended to present plurality as an ontological feature of the social. They avoid any effort to unify or to fuse various elements consisted in social reality into a single ultimate concept. Horkheimer avoids the illusive subject-object fusion that occurs in traditional theory epistemology (Horkheimer, 1989); Marcuse looks for loopholes to save individual consciousness from the confines of one-dimensional society (Marcuse, 2006); while Adorno develops anti-systems thinking to avoid identity thinking of human mind (Adorno, 2004).

At a more practical level, namely in the context of management, the principle of plurality is applied by avoiding fake harmonization between different interests in the organization, or ideological mixing between commercial interests with social interests of society and political interests of the government. The border lines which separated social space, political space, commercial space and other spaces (for example: sacred space and personal space) should not be blurred. Otherwise, it will lead to a singularization of worldview. In Habermasian language, this singularization is the colonialization of the living world by the system. Whereas in the aspect of the end goal, it must be emphasized that as a current in socialism, the end goal aspired by Frankfurt School is an emancipated society, not only culturally or socially, but also materially. This requires a social justice realized in this world, not in hereafter world.

For scholars of management science in Indonesia, CMS is very relevant. In a country of relatively high economic growth and widening social disparities, studies using CMS concepts and methods can help the researchers to find the root causes of social problems, including those that grow from the context of the work environment. The discovery of the root of the problem must often be preceded by an attempt to uncover a critical surface reality that often appears calm and peaceful. After that, then steps for social change and improvement can be built and fought for

CONCLUSION

Critical social philosophy of Frankfurt School was developed at the beginning of 20th century, or more precisely in 1937. On the 60's until 80's decades, the popularity of this school of thought was increased. This philosophy is often associated with The New Left Movement, a universities' student movement rising in 60's and 70's. This philosophy also had inspired the rise of ethical business studies, corporate social responsibility movement, and critical management studies (in Indonesian Bahasa termed as Kajian Manajemen Kritis, shortened as KMK). The USA Academy of Management officially adopted the CMS in 2003. Surprisingly, Indonesian management scholars seemed not very enthusiastic in adopting the concepts and methods of this school of thought.

This late adoption could be due to the lack of information, or probably due to the ideological tone of Frankfurt School which infused the CMS. In the taxonomy of social ideology, The Frankfurt School is located in the domain of neo-Marxism. Unfortunately, the neo-Marxism terminology is wrongly interpreted as a new movement of communist inspired people. This is precisely a fatal misunderstanding. It is true that the Frankfurt school thinkers had launched a sharp criticism on a liberal and capitalistic society. However, they also against the revolutionary practices, authoritarianism, the banished of individuality, and over-determination of economy to the society—all of this are some of communism main characteristics.

Therefore, abandoning The CMS just because it is very critical against the mainstream thought and against any exploitative social stability will risk of losing an interesting epistemological and axiological perspective its offered. There is still a wide space available for us, management scientist and practitioner, to be explored in CMS. Especially in Indonesian context, the rise of neo-managerialism along with neo-liberalism posed a new challenge. Should we continue to dedicate our knowledge only to serve the interest of the shareholder or to provide intellectual support for the wider society, is a question pose to management scholars. It is time to start to think more critically and openly for a wider horizon.

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